

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
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INFO USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY MADRID
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AMEMBASSY WARSAW
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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, FR, UR, US, CSCE
SUBJECT: US POLICY TOWARD FRANCE: THE EAST-WEST
DIMENSION

REF: PARIS 2315

1. IN REF A THE AMBASSADOR PROVIDED HIS RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SECRETARY FOR OVERALL US POLICY TOWARD FRANCE. THIS MESSAGE DEALS WITH US INTERESTS WITH REGARD TO FRANCE'S ROLE IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS AND SUGGESTS DIRECTIONS US POLICY MIGHT FOLLOW TO ENHANCE THEM.

2. SUMMARY: FRANCE HAS COME A LONG WAY SINCE THE DAYS OF ITS "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WITH MOSCOW AND SO HAS CONTRIBUTED IMPORTANTLY TO EUROPEAN AND ATLANTIC COHESIVENESS IN RECENT YEARS.

LOOKING AHEAD, IN SPITE OF OFFICIAL RETICENCE, THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S NEW EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IS POPULARLY WELCOMED HERE. HOWEVER THIS PUBLIC SUPPORT WOULD FADE QUICKLY IF IT WERE PERCEIVED THAT DETENTE ITSELF WERE ENDANGERED. FOR NOW, GOF HAS RESPONDED -- WITH AN EYE TO BREZHNEV'S UPCOMING VISIT AND BELGRADE -- BY DECLINING TO FOLLOW THE AMERICAN LEAD OFFICIALLY, BUT EMPHASIZING THAT THIS IS NOT DUE TO ANY LESSER FRENCH COMMITMENT TO HUMAN ISSUES. IF, CONTRARY TO CURRENT EXPECTATIONS, IT SHOULD TURN OUT THAT THE USSR CANNOT SUSTAIN WESTERN HUMAN RIGHTS CRITICISM AND CONTINUE TO NEGOTIATE EFFECTIVELY ON OTHER ASPECTS OF DETENTE, THE POSSIBILITY CANNOT BE EXCLUDED THAT FRANCE MIGHT INSTINCTIVELY TRY TO RECOVER A MORE PRECISE MIDDLE-GROUND BETWEEN THE TWO SUPER-POWERS. WE CONCLUDE THAT IT SHOULD THEREFORE REMAIN A MAJOR US PREOCCUPATION TO KEEP FRANCE SECRET

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PLAYING IN THE BAND, EVEN IF SOME TUNES ARE MISSED AND IT OCCASIONALLY PERSISTS IN PLAYING OFF KEY.

TO THIS END, AND TO EASE CURRENT QUESTIONING ABOUT THE SCOPE AND BALANCE OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S EAST-WEST AND EUROPEAN POLICIES, WE PROPOSE THAT THE PRESIDENT MAKE A MAJOR FORMAL DECLARATION ON THESE THEMES DURING HIS MAY VISIT TO EUROPE, AT A SUITABLE OCCASION BETWEEN THE NATO AND THE ECONOMIC SUMMITS.

IF THE LEFT COMES TO POWER IN 1978, ITS EAST-WEST POLICIES WILL REQUIRE CAREFUL MONITORING; SINCE PROJECTS SUCH AS THE FRANCO-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP TREATY APPARENTLY BEING TOYED WITH BY MITTERRAND, CAN ONLY CONTRIBUTE TO ONCE AGAIN DILUTING THE EUROPEAN AND ATLANTIC CONSENSUS TO WHICH FRANCE HAS QUIETLY CONTRIBUTED IN RECENT YEARS. END SUMMARY.

3. NO LONGER "SPECIAL": THE DAYS WHEN FRANCE'S COMMU-

NICATIONS WERE STRAINED WITH THE US BUT "SPECIAL" WITH
THE SOVIET UNION HAVE BEEN OVER FOR SOME TIME. THE
PERIODIC STATE VISITS BETWEEN MOSCOW AND PARIS CONTINUE
TO BE HIGH THEATER. GOF ALSO STILL USES ALL SORTS OF
OPPORTUNITIES TO SHOW THAT ITS EASTERN POLICIES ARE NOT
NECESSARILY IDENTICAL WITH WASHINGTON'S OR THOSE FORMU-
LATED AT NATO HEADQUARTERS IN BRUSSELS. HOWEVER, IN
GENERAL, THESE VESTIGES OF GAULLISM ARE MILD THESE DAYS
AND AIMED MORE AT FRANCE'S DOMESTIC THAN ITS FOREIGN

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AUDIENCE. MOREOVER, EVEN IN HIGHLY CHARGED ELECTORAL PERIODS SUCH AS THE PRESENT, THE COMPULSION TO PROVE THAT GOF'S RELATIONS WI MOSCOW ARE AT LEAST AS GOOD AS THE ICF'S - WHICH WAS TRADITIONALLY ONE OF SEVERAL MOTIVATING FORCES -- HAS DISAPPEARED, AS MARCHAIS' DIALOGUE WITH HIS SOVIET COLLEAGUES LAPSES INCREASINGLY INTO MUTUALY RECRIMINATORY INCOHERENCE.

4. WHAT HAS HAPPENED?: FOUR FACTORS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS CHANGE OF NE: FIRST, WITH DE GAULLE HAVING MADE HIS POINTS, BOTH TOWARD WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW, IT HAS GRADUALLY BECOME CLEAR THAT IT WAS NEITHER NECESSARY NOR PRODUCTIVE TO MAINTAIN THE ORIGINAL HIGH DECIBEL COUNT ON THESE ISSUES.

SECONDLY, THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE USSR'S CONTINUING MILITARY EXPANSION HAVE QUIETLY SUNK IN, AT LEAST AT SENIOR LEVELS, AND LED TO THE CONCLUSION THAT SOMEWHAT GREATER EUROPEAN AND EVEN ATLANTIC POLITICAL COHESION IS AGAIN ESSENTIAL.

THIRDLY, THE PARIS-MOSCOW DIALOGUE HAS RUN OUT OF "SAFE" NEW HEMES, EXCEPT PERHAPS IN THE COMMERCIAL FIELD. THIS DEPLETION OF ISSUE HAS BEEN ACCELERATED BY MOSCOW'S AVARICE FOR NEW FRENCH "CONCESSIONS" AT EVERY SENIOR ENCOUNTER, AND IS ILLUSTRATED BY CURRENT FRENCH CASTING ABOUT FOR AT LEAST SOME ITEMS IN THE DETENTE, DISARMAMENT OR PAN-EUROPEAN FIELDS WHICH CAN SAFELY BE OFFERED TO BREE NEV IF HE INDEED FINALLY COMES HERE IN JUNE OR JULY.

LASTLY, AND PERHAPS MOST SURPRISINGLY, THE RISING WAVE OF WARSAW PACT DISSIDENCE AND T E RENEWED "REVELATIONS" OF WARSAW PACT ABUSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS OVER THE LAST YEARS, HAVE LITERALLY HAD A HUGE IMPACT IN FRANCE. THEY

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HAVE CONSEQUENTLY RENEWED PUBLIC COMPREHENSION OF THE VICES OF THESE REGIMES, AND HAVE SO SET THE STAGE, NOT ONLY FOR THE PCF'S DECISION TO MOVE TOWARD "EUROCOMMUNISM", BUT FOR RELIEVING GOF OF SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL PRESSURES TO BE CHUMMY WITH MOSCOW. THAT THESE REVELATIONS WERE NOT US-STIMULATED -- IN FACT QUITE THE CONTRARY -- CONTRIBUTED TO THIS EFFECT.

5. THE US INTEREST: FROM THE US PERSPECTIVE THE RESULTANT NARROWING OF THE EAST-WEST POLICY "GAP" BETWEEN WASHINGTON, BRUSSELS, AND PARIS HAS BORN MAJOR FRUIT:

--IT HAS FACILITATED (COMPARED TO THE SITUATION WHICH PREVAILED SEVERAL YEARS AGO) THE TASK OF COORDINATING WESTERN POSITIONS ON EAST-WEST AND RELATED ISSUES; ON MANY OF WHICH, INCLUDING CSCE, THE FRENCH HAVE BEEN USEFUL, STURDY, ALBEIT INDEPENDENT ALLIES (WE STRESS THAT FRENCH ACTIONS, RATHER THAN FRENCH ATTITUDES ABOUT MODALITIES AND VENUES OF CONSULTATION ARE THE ESSENTIAL YARDSTICK IN THIS REGARD.)

--IT HAS ALSO CONTRIBUTED IN IMPORTANT, IF OFTEN LITTLE NOTICED WAYS TO THE FREQUENT IDENTITY OF FRENCH AND GERMAN VIEWS ON THESE KEY QUESTIONS, WHICH HAS REINFORCED THEIR STRUCTURAL RELATIONSHIP. ITS CURRENT STRENGTH IS BEST ILLUSTRATED BY ITS ABILITY TO SUPPORT CONTINUING FRENCH-GERMAN DIFFERENCES ON CERTAIN ISSUES, SUCH AS MBFR.

--THESE CONSIDERATIONS IN TURN WERE PREREQUISITES FOR THE RECENT REMARKABLE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL

CONSULTATION AMONG THE NINE, WHICH IS INCREASINGLY SIGNIFICANT IN THE "EUROPEAN" CONTEXT.

--LASTLY, AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE NARROWING OF THIS "GAP" HAS FRUSTRATED MOSCOW'S HOPES OF USING FRANCE TO DRIVE A WEDGE INTO THE ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP AND PERMANENTLY SINKING "EUROPE."

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FOR ALL THESE REASONS IT SHOULD BE A MAJOR PRE-OCCUPATION OF THE US GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE, AND TO MAKE IT POLITICALLY POSSIBLE FOR FRANCE TO STAY ROUGHLY IN TUNE WITH US AND ITS OTHER ALLIES ON THE MAJOR EAST-WEST POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC ISSUES. OBVIOUSLY, THE FRENCH WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY MORE OR LESS OFF KEY TO PROVE THAT THEY ARE FRENCH. THE MAIN POINT, FROM WHICH WE SHOULD NEVER ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE TOO DISTRACTED BY PROCEDURAL OR SECONDARY SUBSTANTIVE IRRITATIONS, WILL CONTINUE TO BE TO KEEP THEM IN THE BAND.

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6. ARE THINGS AGAIN GETTING WOBBLY?: WHILE WE ARE IN A SENSE AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH-POINT IN OUR RELATIONS IN THESE REGARDS, WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

WE FIND THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S RECENT REEMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS HAS STRUCK A DEEPER CHORD IN FRENCH PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS THAN MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED. TO MANY, INCLUDING MUCH OF THE FRENCH LEFT, IT IS A FITTING RESPONSE TO THE RENEWED "REVELATIONS" OF SOVIET BLOC ABUSES OF ITS CITIZENS IN RECENT YEARS. FRANCE ALSO RECOGNIZES IN THE PRESIDENT'S FORTHRIGHTNESS THE TRACES OF ITS OWN TRADITIONS AND ADMIRES AMERICAN COURAGE IN ONCE MORE CALLING THINGS PRECISELY WHAT THEY ARE. WHILE GISCARD REFUSED TO SEE AMALRIK FOR STUFFY, UNIMAGINATIVE REASONS OF STATE, THE MORE POSITIVE POPULAR RESPONSE TO THE CARTER APPROACH COMES THROUGH CLEARLY IN THE ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF SPACE CURRENTLY DEVOTED IN THE FRENCH PRESS TO THESE AND RELATED QUESTIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. IT HAS MOST RECENTLY ALSO FOUND AN ECHO IN DE GUIRINGAUD'S NEW EMPHASIS ON THE FACT THAT GOF'S LOWER-KEYED TACTICAL APPROACH TO HUMAN RIGHTS DOES NOT REPRESENT ANY LESSER SENSITIVITY THAN THE US'S TO THE HUMAN ELEMENT.

AND YET, WE WOULD LACK CANDOR IF WE DID NOT ADD THAT THERE ARE ALSO SIGNS OF A CERTAIN MILD UNEASE. GISCARD AND SCHMIDT DID QUIETLY AGREE NOT TO ENGAGE IN AN OFFICIAL CAMPAIGN ON HUMAN RIGHTS, SIMILAR TO OURS, AND TO LEAVE THESE ISSUES IN THE FIRST INSTANCE TO THE MEDIA, UNDOUBTEDLY IN ORDER TO BE LESS PROVOCATIVE TO THE USSR. ON A LESS FORMAL LEVEL WE NOTE THAT PARIS IS BUZZING WITH THE QUESTION: WHERE WILL THIS ALL LEAD?

IT IS OUR CONVICTION THAT THIS CURRENT QUESTIONING NEED NOT BE A MATTER OF SIGNIFICANT CONCERN AS LONG

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AS THE BASIC DETENTE PROCESS IS NOT IN DANGER. FOR THE PRESENT, THIS IS OBVIOUSLY NOT THE CASE. IT IS ACCEPTED HERE THAT THE USSR IS SUFFICIENTLY COMMITTED TO DETENTE AND ATTACHED TO SALT, TO BE ABLE TO TAKE THE NEW US EMPHASES MORE OR LESS IN STRIDE. GOF ITSELF THINKS IT CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THIS PROCESS -- AND EARN MINOR BROWNIE POINTS -- BY PLANNING TO BE LESS STRIDENT THAN IT EXPECTS US TO BE AT BELGRADE.

IF IT SHOULD NEVERTHELESS BECOME CLEAR THAT THE USSR CANNOT SIMULTANEOUSLY ABSORB HUMAN RIGHTS CRIT-

ICISM FROM THE WEST AND NEGOTIATE MEANINGFULLY IN SALT, MBFR AND OTHER DETENTE AREAS, THEN WE WILL HAVE TO BE VERY CAREFUL LEST FRANCE AGAIN INSTINCTIVELY TRIES TO FIND SAFE MIDDLE GROUND BETWEEN TWO QUARRELING SUPER POWERS; THUS REWIDENING THE "GAP" AND REINTRODUCING TENSIONS WITH US AND PROBABLY OTHERS IN EUROPE, SUCH AS THE FRG.

IN SUM, FROM THE FRENCH PERSPECTIVE, US HUMAN RIGHTS EMPHASES ARE FINE AND EVEN NECESSARY. HOWEVER, IT IS AXIOMATIC HERE THAT EUROPE'S PRESENT AND FUTURE RESTS ON CONFIDENCE, BUILT NOT ONLY ON FAITH IN WESTERN VALUES AND THE US DETERRENT, BUT ALSO ON THE UNINTERRUPTED DEVELOPMENT OF A GRADUAL PROCESS OF DETENTE.

7. COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENT OF OUR POLICY: SINCE THE OVERALL US PURPOSE IS OBVIOUSLY TO REASSERT BOTH HUMAN RIGHTS AND, AT THE SAME TIME, TO ENHANCE DETENTE, WE BELIEVE THAT SOME OF THESE DEVELOPING UNCERTAINTIES HERE, AND PROBABLY ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE, MIGHT WELL BE EASED BY AN EARLY MAJOR US DECLARATION, EITHER BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE OR PREFERABLY THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF, FORMALLY PLACING THESE ISSUES IN PERSPECTIVE.

IT IS ALREADY WIDELY UNDERSTOOD IN FRANCE WHAT OUR INTENTIONS ARE. HOWEVER, WE ALSO SENSE THAT THE EUROPEANS WOULD BE FURTHER GREATLY REASSURED AS TO
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SCOPE AND BALANCE AMONG OUR PURPOSES, IF THEY WERE SET OUT FORMALLY IN A MAJOR DISCOURSE.

WE COULD VISUALIZE THAT SUCH A STATEMENT, MADE IN A SUITABLY IMPORTANT SETTING, COULD ADDRESS ITSELF TO THESE THEMES IN THEIR BROADEST SENSE, REASSERTING NOT ONLY OUR PROFOUND COMMITMENT TO DETENTE IN ITS SEVERAL ASPECTS, BUT ALSO TO THE PROCESS OF EUROPEAN UNIFICATION, FOR WHICH MAINTENANCE OF CLOSE RELATIONS WITH FRANCE IS AN ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITE. SUCH A SPEECH ALSO COULD USEFULLY SIGNAL THE PRECISE TONE WE WISH TO CONVEY TO ALL CONCERNED WITH RESPECT TO BELGRADE.

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IT OCCURS TO US THAT THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO
EUROPE TO ATTEND THE NATO AND ECONOMIC SUMMITS WOULD
PROVIDE A SPLENDID OCCASION AND SETTING FOR THIS PUR-
POSE. SINCE GISCARD WILL NOT BE ABLE TO BE PRESENT
AT THE NATO SUMMIT FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL REASONS, OUR
RECOMMENDATION WOULD BE THAT, IF SUCH A SPEECH COULD

BE MADE, IT MIGHT FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT TAKE PLACE IN THE BRIEF TIME PERIOD BETWEEN THE TWO SUMMITS.

8. THE UNCERTAIN FUTURE: THE ABOVE REFLECTS ASSUMPTIONS CREATED BY THE PRESENT GOVERNING MAJORITY IN FRANCE. IF, AS IS QUITE POSSIBLE, THE FRENCH LEFT WINS THE ELECTIONS IN 1978 AND FORMS A GOVERNMENT, THESE ASSUMPTIONS WILL CHANGE. OUR IMPRESSIONS ARE THAT NO HARD AND FAST DECISIONS HAVE SO FAR BEEN TAKEN, EITHER WITHIN THE PS OR THE LEFT AS A WHOLE, ON THE PRECISE POSITIONS THEY WOULD ADOPT ON MAJOR ISSUES IN THE EAST-WEST FIELD. HOWEVER, THERE ARE CERTAIN POTENTIALLY DISQUIETING SIGNS.

THUS THE PCF, WHICH STILL FAITHFULLY FOLLOWS SOVIET LINES ON MOST FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES, FORESEES THAT ITS MINISTERS IN SUCH A GOVERNMENT OF THE LEFT WOULD HAVE TO PARTICIPATE COLLEGIAALLY IN CABINET DISCUSSION ON ALL ISSUES, INCLUDING FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY, REGARDLESS OF THE PORTFOLIOS THEY ARE GIVEN (PARIS 5058). THIS COULD HAVE POTENTIALLY UNSETTLING EFFECTS, NOTWITHSTANDING RECENT TRADITION THAT FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY HAS BEEN THE PROVINCE OF THE ELYSEE.

THE PS IS ITSELF ALSO STILL CASTING ABOUT FOR WAYS TO RECONCILE THE VIEWS OF RIVAL FACTIONS WITHIN THE PARTY ON A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT ISSUES, SUCH AS DETENTE, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND EUROPE AND THE "DOMINATION OF THE AMERICAN MULTINATIONALS." THIS WILL NOT BE EASY. THAT WE WILL HAVE TO WATCH THE PROCESS CAREFULLY
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WAS RECENTLY ILLUSTRATED BY MITTERRAND'S PUBLIC REFERENCE TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE PS MIGHT BE PREPARED TO GRANT MOSCOW ITS WISH FOR A FRIENDSHIP TREATY.

WHETHER OR NOT THIS COMES ABOUT, A FUTURE LEFT GOVERNMENT MIGHT CONSIDER IT EXPEDIENT TO TRY AND IMPROVE UPON GAULLIST HISTORY THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS OWN UNIQUE SOCIALIST SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH MOSCOW. IF SUCH A HYPOTHETICAL POLICY DETERMINATION LEADS TO LESS RESISTANCE TO A WHOLE RANGE OF SOVIET POLICY DESIRES IN THE DETENTE, DISARMAMENT AND PAN-EUROPEAN FIELDS THAN THAT EXERCISED BY THE CURRENT GOF, THERE WOULD BE A RISK OF NEW STRAINS WITH THE INCREASINGLY CONSERVATIVE FRG WITH POTENTIAL NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR EUROPE.

FOR THE PRESENT, IT IS STILL TOO SOON TO CRYSTAL GAZE IN DETAIL. WHAT WE CAN AND SHOULD DO, ONCE THE FRENCH MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ARE CONCLUDED, IS TO ENTER INTO A BROADER DIALOGUE WITH THE PS HERE AND IN WASHINGTON, ON MAJOR EAST-WEST AND RELATED ISSUES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR ABILITY TO SITUATE THEIR DEVELOP-

ING POLICIES WITHIN LIMITS WHICH WILL MINIMIZE NEW
DIFFICULTIES IN THE WEST.
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